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Edward H. Heffner, Editor, Bennett Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania.

Franklin B. Krauss, Secretary and Treasurer, The Pennsylvania State College, Box 339, State College, Pennsylvania.

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TEMPERATE ROMANS

One of the reasons¹ given for believing in the temperance of the Greeks is the fact that ancient writers cited Greek individuals for their self-control in wine drinking. If such an argument is sound, the Romans could meet the test far more certainly than the Greeks. From the time that wine drinking came into vogue in the first half of the Second Century B.C. down through the succeeding ages, with the exception of the First Century after Christ most of the leading men of Rome receive mention for their temperance in the use of wine.

The earliest of the Romans who has much to offer for this study is Cato the Elder; he is represented as listening to Nearchus, who taught him Plato's doctrine that pleasure is evil's chief bait and that those thoughts which most separate the soul from the bodily affections most enfranchise and purify it. Thereupon, as Plutarch (*Cato Maior* ii.3) says, Cato fell in love the more with frugality and temperance. Ammianus Marcellinus (xvi.5.2), praises Cato's temperance and cites his famous *bon mot*: 'Where there is very great care about food, there is very little care about virtue.'

Cato's temperance, however, was not total abstinence. On the Spanish expedition Cato drank the same wine (probably *posca*, hardly more than vinegar) that his sailors did (Valerius Maximus iv.3.11). Cato also served himself with the same wine which he gave his workmen (Plutarch *Cato Maior* iii.2). Plutarch (*Cato Maior* i.7) says that when Cato was with the army, he used to drink water only, except that when he was extremely thirsty he might put a little vinegar

into it, or if he found his strength to fail him, he would take a little wine. Cicero in his essay *On Old Age* (xiii.45), it will be remembered, gives a realistic touch to the setting by making his chief character (Cato) tell how he enjoyed his wine at dinners. The artist, no doubt, touched up the picture a bit. Horace (*Od.* iii.21) makes it a tradition that the virtuous old Cato was wont to warm himself with wine.

From this time on there are data respecting the drinking habits of most of the prominent Romans. A younger contemporary of Cato was Scipio the Younger. Polybius (xxxii.25, and 8; 28.10-13) in recounting the general breakdown of morals among the Romans following the opening up of the East says that a great many of the young Romans wasted their energies at banquets enlivened with poetry and wine, but that Scipio set his heart on a different path in life.

Gaius Gracchus (Plut. *Gai. Grac.* 1.2) was averse to winebibbing. He was temperate and self-restrained in contrast with others (*Tib. Grac.* ii.3), with his elders (*Gai. Grac.* ii.1). He boasted that he maintained no canteen at his headquarters (Aul. Gell. xv.12.2). Tiberius (Plut. *Tib. Grac.* ii.3) was even more simple and plain than Gaius in matters of the table and in mode of life. Marius (Plut. *Mar.* iii.1) had a reputation for temperance. On such occasions as a triumph, however, Marius would drink, using a particular kind of cup sported by Bacchus after his mastery of India (Valerius Maximus iii.6.6). Marius toward the end of his life became a nervous wreck and took to carousing (Plut. *Mar.* xl.3). Pompey, like Marius, was temperate (Patereulus ii.29.4). Cicero, in his *Second Philippic* (xxvi-

xxviii) points one of his most brilliant passages by a contrast of Pompey and Antony. Pompey had his hands full for a time with a certain Sertorius. Plutarch says (*Sertor.* xiii) of this hero that he did not devote his leisure hours to heavy drinking. Compare this statement, however, with the story that Sertorius in his later years took to drinking and lost his life in a carouse (*Appian Bell. Civ.* i.13.113). Plutarch (*Sertor.* xxvi) knows nothing of this degeneration. Crassus, like his associate in politics, Pompey, was known for his temperance (*Plut. Cras.* i.1).

Cicero, it is true, got a bit tipsy on one occasion, as is recorded in his letter to Trebatius (*Ad. Fam.* vii.22). He was not, however, so overcome with drink that on his arrival home he could not look up a point at law under discussion, write up his opinion in the matter, and dispatch it to Trebatius before going to bed. There seems to be no other explicit record of Cicero's drinking. Though he may have taken a little wine at his meals, he certainly made it the rule (*De Sen.* xiv.50) of his life never to let sensual pleasures interfere with intellectual. The story (*Plut. Cie.* xxvii.2) that Cicero while drinking water joked at the expense of a wine-bibbing friend may be indicative of the orator's preference. His philosophical discussions took place in the morning, when drinking was taboo. Thus, in the *De Oratore* (i.62.265) the first part of the discussion began early enough to be concluded before the heat of the day came on. This timeing may have been deliberate, for he says: 'We cannot use our minds well when we have filled our stomach with food and drink' (*Tusc. Dis.* v.35.100). Besides, Cicero took every opportunity to make fun of the Hedonistic philosophy of life. A good example of this attitude appears in a letter (*Ad. Fam.* vii.12) of his to Trebatius, in which he twists his young friend for having joined the Epicureans. Cicero (*In Pison.* xvi.37) would even drop into terms of scorn, as when he squelches his adversary by calling him 'our Epicurus, the product of a hog-pen, not a school.' One may characterize Cicero's attitude toward drinking from his letter to Gallus. This agent had bought for Cicero some statues of Bacchic dancers. Cicero (*Ad Fam.* vii.23.2) took exception to the deal,

saying: 'Where at my house is there a place for Bacchae?'

Cicero was enough of a connoisseur of wine to account for his joke on Damasippus. This famous art collector had placed some ordinary wine before his guests, saying: 'Have some of this forty-year-old Falernian.' Cicero (*Macrob. Saturn.* ii.3 [Nisard]) replied: 'It bears its age well.'

Other men of the times belonged to the ranks of the temperate. A partial exception is Cato the Younger who would often drink until morning, but mostly for love of conversation (*Plut. Cato Minor* vi.1). On the contrary, Cassius throughout his life drank water (*Senec. Ep.* 83.12). Julius Caesar, like Hannibal,² took food for the sustenance of life, not for pleasure (*Patercul.* ii.41). Suetonius (*Jul. Caes.* 53) says of Caesar that he was acknowledged by even his enemies to be abstemious in regard to wine. The same biographer records a remark ascribed to Cato the Younger that Caesar was the only sober man among all those who were engaged in the design to subvert the government (*Suet. Jul. Caes.* 53). This estimate of Cato tends to take the sting out of his famous gibe, when in exasperation he dubbed Caesar a 'sot' (*Plut. Cato Minor* xxiv.2): Yet, once at Cicero's Caesar ate and drank without fear (*Ad Att.* xiii.52). Caesar took part in an after-dinner drinking party the evening before his assassination; still, just as at his dinner with Cicero, serious conversation rather than carousing seems to have been the order of the evening (*App. Bell. Civ.* ii.16.115). Augustus had the reputation of being extremely sparing in the use of wine, being inclined to this course even by nature (*Suet. Aug.* 77). Nicolaus of Damascus (*Life of Caesar*) says: 'The young Caesar (Augustus) lived soberly and with self-restraint,' and again: 'He did not associate with drunken youths nor pass much time in drinking.' (*ibid.* 13). Suetonius, quoting Cornelius Nepos, says (*Aug.* 77) that Augustus while in camp at Modena drank only thrice at supper and when he drank the most, he never exceeded a pint; if he drank more, he threw it up; he rarely drank in the daytime (*Suet. Aug.* 77). Instead of drinking, he used to take a piece of bread dipped in

cold water, or a slice of cucumber, or some leaves of lettuce, or a green, sharp, juicy apple (Suet. *Aug.* 77). Augustus' wife Livia ascribed her long life of upwards of eighty years to the use of Pucinum; she never drank any other (Plin. *N. H.* xiv.6[8].60[Mayhoff]). This list, comprising nearly all of the most prominent Romans for upwards of one hundred and fifty years, shows that, as in Democratic Greece so in Republican Rome, men of affairs regularly and deliberately kept themselves under complete control in matters of drinking.

Later writers maintained the interest of their fore-runners in the drinking habits of their betters. A scrutiny of the data presented may throw light on the fairness of the earlier writers. For if a Trajan proves to have a reputation for self-control in drinking, it may be said that the ill-repute of Nero in such matters rests on a firmer foundation than scandal mongering. In fact, Trajan, though devoted to drinking, yet kept sober (Dio Cass. *Epitome* lxviii.7.4). Hadrian (Dio Cass. *Epitome* lxix.7.3) breakfasted without wine and drank water (*Aug. Hist., Hadrian.* x.2) flavored with vinegar. Antoninus Pius (Marc. Aurel. *Medit.* i.16.3) was sober in all things. Marcus Aurelius (*op. cit.* i.3), owing to the training of his mother, practiced a simple and abstemious way of living. He also states that everything in nature was produced for some wise end; for instance, the vine (*op. cit.* viii.19). This sentiment of Aurelius' hardly fits in with the iconoclasm of his friend Fronto, who, writing to his master, refers to the attempt of the Thracian Lyceurgus to put a ban on wine drinking, notes his cutting down of the vine, and thinks that it would have been a good thing for many nations and races if the vine had been extirpated from the face of the earth.³ The capable and incorruptible lieutenant of Commodus, Perennis, had a reputation for temperance (Dio Cass. *Epitome* lxxiii.10.1).

As in the preceding centuries, so in the Third the authors regularly include data about wine in their biographical characterizations. Thus Avidius Cassius would take drink or let it alone at will, but on the march would allow his soldiers only lard, biscuit, and vinegar (*Aug. Hist.*,

Avid. Cass. iii.4; v.3). Severus (*Aug. Hist., Sever.* xix.8) was at times fond of drinking, but in general, was simple in his living. Pescennius Niger (*Aug. Hist., Pesc. Nig.* vii.8), though said to have been very fond of wine (*op. cit.* vi.6), made his soldiers drink water (*op. cit.* x.3; vi.6). It is also stated of him (*op. cit.* x.3) that he would allow the soldiers on the march no wine but ordered them to be content with vinegar.⁴

Clodius Albinus, like Avidius Cassius, drank heavily or abstained at his pleasure (*Aug. Hist., Clod. Alb.* xiii.1-2). The Elder Gordian was sparing in the use of wine (*Aug. Hist., Three Gordians* vi.6). The Second Gordian is noted as being somewhat fond of wine (*op. cit.* xix.1). The young Maximinus used wine very sparingly (*Aug. Hist., Two Maximini* xxviii.2). Alexander Severus is said to have drunk cold water, adding a little flavored wine in summer (*Aug. Hist., Alex. Sever.* xxxvii.11). At military dinners he would drink more freely (*op. cit.* xxxix.1). Maximus drank very sparingly of wine (*Aug. Hist., Max. et Balb.* vi.1).

After the political chaos of the Third Century the Empire settled down under the rule of competent men, many of whom left a reputation for being temperate in their way of life. Diocletian,⁵ founder of the autoocracy, always subserved his passions to his ambition. Constantine⁶ throughout his life 'preserved the vigor of his constitution by a strict adherence to the domestic virtues of chastity and temperance.' Constantius, by moderation in eating and drinking, had such robust health that he was rarely ill (Ammian. *Marcel.* xxi.16.5). Julian the Apostate imposed on himself a rigid temperance—'a thing which is most difficult for anyone' (*op. cit.* xvi.5.1). Valentinian I⁷ 'by the habits of chastity and temperance preserved his own and the public esteem.' Theodosius The Great did not allow wine to disturb his mind (*Gk. Anth.* xv.9). Justinian permitted himself no indulgence even to the point of asceticism (Procop. *Anecd.* xiii.28 [Haury]).

An interpretation of the foregoing data may lead to one or the other of two conclusions. The fact that prominent Romans generally have left a record of temperate living, at least as far as

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wine is concerned, may be taken as typical of the state of affairs in society as a whole. Or, again, it may be that such citations were made by way of contrast with possibly some educative purpose in the mind of the reciter. That such citations are not found for the early period of Rome, when society was surely straight-laced in such matters, seems to bear out the latter suggestion. There was no need of pointing to examples of temperate living. But with the marked change in drinking ways noted by ancient documents and pictures in the art forms of Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius, Seneca, Petronius, Martial, and Juvenal, to say nothing of the lurid phraseology of the Church Fathers, it was very much to the point to cite the exemplariness of such men as the Gracchi and Hadrian. And when society, if one is to believe the records,⁸ had been conditioned by the comedies to the stage of drunkenness contemplated by Aristotle (*Polit.* vii.15.1336b) and accepted by Mommsen⁹ as having taken place at Rome, it might not have been at all out of place to keep reminding the masses of men who would not allow loose-living to interfere with their business.

NOTES

¹ C. B. Gulick, *Modern Traits in Old Greek Life* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), 42–43.

² Of whom Justin (xxxii.4.10) says: ‘He never indulged in more than a pint of wine at a time’; and Livy (xxi.4.6): He ‘determined the quantity of his food and drink by the needs of nature, not by pleasure.’

³ C. R. Haines (Ed.), *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Lucius Verus, Antoninus Pius, and Various Friends* (New York, Putnam’s Sons, 1919–1920), II, 64.

⁴ *Sic also Avidius Cassius (Aug. Hist., Avid. Cass. v.3).*

⁵ E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of Rome*, (London, Methuen, 1909, edited by J. B. Bury), L378.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II.215; an overstatement, probably.

⁷ Gibbon, III.8. Cf. Ammianus xxx.9.2.

⁸ Accepted by H. W. Johnston (*The Private Life of the Romans* [Chicago, Scott, Foresman, 1905], 214) as indicative of ‘degeneracy and decay’.

⁹ *History of Rome* (tr. by W. P. Dickson; New York, Scribner’s Sons, 1887), II, 508–509, 524–525; *Römische Geschichte* (ed. 6; Berlin, Weidmann, 1874), I, 890, 903.

ARTHUR PATCH MC KINLAY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PLATO’S DOCTRINE OF METEMPSYCHOSIS AND ITS SOURCE¹

In the history of the world’s religious beliefs the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or metempsychosis, has played no small part. Metempsychosis has been the most characteristic belief of the majority of the peoples of India for the last two and a half millennia; it was embodied in the teachings of several of the most important Greek philosophers and was accepted by a number of religious groups in Greece; belief in the doctrine continued in the Hellenistic Age, especially among the Stoics, and appears in a famous passage of Vergil’s *Aeneid*;² the doctrine was accepted by the Gnostics and by the Neo-Platonists; and even at the present time it is proving attractive to some Europeans and Americans.

Metempsychosis is popularly defined as the belief that at death the soul passes into another body. But one cannot be long engaged in studying the doctrine as it appears in Greece and India before discovering that the popular definition can be rendered more precise by the addition of three restrictions: the place where the soul and its new body dwell must be, at least in part, this world; the new body must be acquired for more than a temporary period; and the soul, which passes from one body to another, must be that which creates an individual. The term ‘metempsychosis’ will here be used to denote this restricted doctrine, thus excluding certain primitive beliefs that are sometimes referred to this head by students of religion.

Metempsychosis would not be so interesting as it is to students of Greek religion and philosophy, were it not that Plato enunciates the doctrine in a number of the most striking and remarkable passages of his Dialogues. I shall examine the several Platonic references to metempsychosis in their contexts and discuss briefly the source from which Plato probably derived his knowledge of the doctrine, taking the pertinent Dialogues in the chronological order of their composition, as established beyond much doubt by Ritter and others.

The earliest of the Dialogues that deals with metempsychosis is the *Meno*. Before considering the passages that deal with the doctrine

specifically, we had best summarize the whole dialogue in order to show the context in which Plato first wrote at length concerning the doctrine.

Meno, a rich young Thessalian visiting in Athens, asks Socrates whether Virtue can be taught. Socrates replies that one must first know what Virtue is, and urges Meno to define it. Meno proposes three definitions, each of which is proven false by Socrates. Meno is reduced to a state of *aporia*: Socrates, like the sting-ray, has paralyzed his victim. There can be no acquisition of knowledge, says the disgruntled Meno, for what you do not know you will fail to recognize when you *do* come upon it. The *Meno* has here reached the point at which the earlier, the so-called Socratic, Dialogues come to an end; but Socrates is not content to leave his pupil in this despondent condition. The search for knowledge seems to Socrates to be eminently worthwhile and he proceeds to give the reason for his confidence.³

He begins: '... I have heard men and women with a knowledge of religious matters—'

'What did they say?', asks Meno.

'A true thing, it seemed to me, and good.'

'What was it, and who were they?'

'Whoever of the priests and priestesses care to be able to give an account of the matters with which they are concerned. Pindar says it, too, and as many other of the poets as are truly inspired. What they say is as follows; see if they seem to you to be speaking the truth. They say that the human soul is immortal, and that at one time it apparently ceases to exist—which men call dying—and then is born again, but that it never ceases completely to exist, and that therefore it is necessary to live as holy a life as possible, for [here Socrates begins a quotation, presumably from Pindar]

"in the ninth year Persephone sends back to the sun above the souls of those from whom she has received ancient woe's atonement, and from those very souls grow up glorious kings and men swift and strong and great sages, and at the last they are called pure heroes among men."

Now, since the soul is immortal and has been born many times and has seen the things of this world and of Hades and, indeed, everything,

there is nothing which it does not know. Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that it is possible for the soul to remember Virtue and other things with which it previously has become acquainted. Since a certain kinship pervades all Nature and since the soul knows everything, nothing prevents it when it has remembered just one thing—which men call learning—from discovering everything else for itself, if one is bold and does not tire in the search. Searching and learning are nothing but recollection.'

In this passage metempsychosis is assumed as a likely hypothesis on the authority of religious people, both male and female, and recollection is deduced from it. Because of the power of recollection, the acquisition of knowledge is possible.

Meno takes no notice of the doctrine of metempsychosis, but asks Socrates for a further demonstration of the power of recollection. Socrates, by a process of questioning, elicits from a slave of Meno the method for constructing a square double a given square in area. Meno knows that his slave has not previously received instruction in geometry and therefore is obliged to admit the existence of recollection, which carries metempsychosis with it as a prerequisite.

At the close of the whole passage Socrates says that he will not insist upon the details of his refutation of Meno's paradox, but only upon the falsity of the doctrine itself.⁴ Meno, thus encouraged, is prevailed upon to continue the search for knowledge, but insists upon returning to his original question, whether Virtue can be taught. Socrates then proposes to continue the investigation by making an hypothesis: Virtue is Knowledge; therefore it is teachable. But the subsequent discussion fails to reveal any teacher of Virtue, although Anytus joins in the search for one. Virtue, therefore, cannot be Knowledge. But the practical results of knowledge can be simulated by Right Opinion. The Dialogue closes with a reiteration by Socrates that the real nature of Virtue must be known before other questions about it can be answered.

Metempsychosis is not advanced in the *Meno* as a demonstrable fact, an object of *phronesis*, but as a 'likely opinion.' Socrates, as we have

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seen, does not insist upon the details of his proof. In the first portion of the proof Socrates explicitly states that he accepts metempsychosis on faith from certain holy men and women. Right opinion, however, is in no way inferior to knowledge as a guide for practical activity, and therefore truths of faith, such as the doctrine of metempsychosis, are as important in the conduct of everyday life as are sense-data.

The version of metempsychosis presented in the *Meno* is based upon Pindar, so far as we can determine from Plato's words. Now, besides the Pindaric fragment embedded in the *Meno*, there is one other extant passage of Pindar that refers to metempsychosis, and that is in the Second Olympian Ode, which was composed to honor Theron, tyrant of Aeragas, for his victory in the four-horse chariot race at the Olympic Games of 476 B.C. While the Ode and the fragment differ in detail, they are not inconsistent. The existence of some sort of religious society believing in metempsychosis at the court of Theron is clearly implied by the existence of a Pindaric Ode giving expression to the doctrine, for one cannot easily imagine a victory ode meant to be heard by one man only.

The little evidence at our disposal indicates that Theron probably belonged to a society with Pythagorean connections. In the first place, the long mathematical discussion between Socrates and the slave boy in the *Meno*, bound in with the discussion of metempsychosis, may indicate a Pythagorean source for the doctrine, for the mathematical studies of the Pythagoreans were and are well known. Secondly, in the *Phaedo*,⁵ metempsychosis is discussed with the doctrine of the Mean, another possible indication of Pythagorean influence. Thirdly, it is known that Pythagoras admitted women as well as men to his discourses and the common life of his disciples. This may be the reason why Socrates mentions priestesses and women as well as priests and men at the beginning of his account of metempsychosis.

There is yet another link connecting the *Meno* with Pythagorean influences. Ritter's study of the order in which Plato's Dialogues were written places the *Meno* directly after the *Gorgias*.

It is reasonably certain that the *Gorgias* was written just before Plato's first Sicilian journey; the *Meno*, therefore, must have been written either during or just after it, when Plato had come in contact for the first time with the followers of Pythagoras. That Pythagoras taught the doctrine of metempsychosis is certain, although contemporary or nearly contemporary evidence for this assertion is scanty.

We have seen that Plato first introduces metempsychosis in his Dialogues after his first visit to Magna Graecia, where the doctrine had been taught by Pythagoras and was later current at the court of Theron of Aeragas. There is still to be mentioned another evidence of the currency of metempsychosis in Sicily. The doctrine was taught by the philosopher Empedocles who, it must be remembered, is most often associated with Aeragas, the very city of which Theron was later tyrant.

When once Plato had taken up the doctrine of metempsychosis, his interest in it did not flag throughout the remainder of his life. The *Cratylus* is the next Dialogue, according to Ritter's chronology, that contains a reference to the doctrine. The *Cratylus* is devoted to investigating whether words are applied to the things they designate from mere convention or whether there is a more objective relation between word and thing. In the course of the investigation Socrates examines the etymologies of a series of words, such as *God*, *demon*, *hero*, *man*, *soul* and *body*. The passage on 'body'⁶ can be paraphrased as follows.

Some derive body (*σῶμα*) from tomb (*σῆμα*) because they believe that the soul is buried in the particular body which it happens to be occupying at the moment, as in a tomb. This is clearly a reference to metempsychosis and it is equally clear that the holders of this doctrine are not named. Others derive *body* from reveal (*σημαίνειν*) because the soul cannot communicate with the outside world except by means of the body within which it is enclosed. The followers of Orpheus, on the other hand, derive it from 'keep' (*σωζεῖν*) because they believe that the soul is kept in the body as in a prison till it atones for its sins; that is, the Orphics believe that we atone for our sins

here in this world, and that death comes only after atonement is complete. There is no reference to any other life. It should be clearly understood that Plato does not attribute the doctrine of metempsychosis to the followers of Orpheus, as is very often maintained. Concerning this more will be said later.

As a matter of fact, the *Gorgias* provides an indication that those who believe that the soul is imprisoned in its present body as in a tomb are connected with some society of Pythagorean type. Socrates quotes a passage of Euripides: 'Who knows whether life is death, and death life?'

'I have heard,' continues Socrates, 'that we are now dead and that the body is our tomb, and that the appetitive part of the soul is capable of fluctuation and persuasion.' Socrates then gives a mythical tale illustrative of the latter point, a tale devised by 'some clever man, perhaps a Sicilian or an Italian.' Now, Pythagoras lived and taught in Italy and Empedocles, in Sicily; it may be, then, that the 'clever man' who devised the tale was a follower of Pythagoras or Empedocles and that the doctrine of the soul's confinement in the body and the association of *σώμα* with *σῆμα* were also part of their teaching.

Two passages of the *Phaedo* give us much more detailed information concerning the doctrine of metempsychosis than is found in the *Meno*. In the first passage Socrates has been saying that the philosopher will face death with equanimity, for it brings the possibility of releasing the soul from all the passions and impurities of the body. Cebes objects that this would be very well if we were certain that the soul, at death, does not vanish away as a breath or a puff of smoke. Socrates replies⁸ that there is a traditional account that souls at death do not perish, but journey to the other world, whence they are born again into this world. Socrates then gives two reasons for believing in metempsychosis.

The first reason is the principle of generation from opposites. All things, says Socrates, arise from their opposites. If something becomes larger, for example, it is obvious that it was previously smaller; and, conversely, if it becomes smaller, it must previously have been larger. Thus smaller and larger are a pair of opposites

connected by the opposite processes of increasing and decreasing. Life and death are another such pair, connected by the processes of dying and being born. We know that all living things die; because of the principle of generation from opposites, we may suppose that all dead things become living once more by the process of birth.

The second reason is the doctrine of recollection, which previously appeared in the *Meno* in connection with metempsychosis.

The next few pages of the *Phaedo*⁹ are devoted to showing that the soul is an incomposite, and therefore indestructible, substance. If we believe the account of the initiates in the mysteries, this indestructible soul of ours is likely to undergo strange experiences after death. The soul that is pure and free from taint of the body (the philosopher's soul) proceeds to the unseen region and there lives a blessed life, free from all care. The soul, on the other hand, that is not free from bodily taint but has put its faith in sense-data is weighed down by the material that clings to it from the body, of which it was so fond, and lingers in the vicinity of its grave for a season, atoning for its sins. When the desire comes upon it, it is once more put into a body, which is selected according to the way in which the soul lived its previous life: the greedy and immoderate into asses; the just from habit into bees, wasps, ants, or just men; and the just from real knowledge, the philosophers, into gods.

For a description of a single transmigration more elaborate than the account in the *Phaedo*, we must refer to the very close of the *Republic*. In the Ninth Book the main topic of discussion—that Justice by itself is better than Injustice by itself—is finally finished, and it becomes proper to consider the rewards and punishments attendant upon Justice and Injustice. In this life both gods and men join in honoring and aiding the just man; how much more marvelous are the things that will befall in the other world. Then follows the wonderful tale told by Er, son of Armenius, after his return from the realm of death.¹⁰

Immediately after death the soul passes to a meadow in which it spends seven days. On the

seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth days it travels, and on the tenth day catches sight of a straight pillar of light stretching through heaven and earth, which it reaches on the eleventh day. This pillar forms the axis upon which revolve the heavenly spheres that support the various planets and the fixed stars. The three Fates sit there, turning the heavenly circles.

The souls come before Lachesis in groups and are placed in order by a prophet, who then takes lots and patterns of lives from the lap of the goddess, mounts a lofty rostrum and addresses the assembled souls. He tells the souls that they may choose their own guiding spirits and, in an order determined by lot, each is to choose its next incarnation, a choice which Necessity will then ratify. The prophet finishes speaking and casts the lots among the souls. Each soul takes the lot that has fallen nearest it and notes its number; in the order of these numbers the souls are to choose their next lives.

The choice of one's next incarnation is an act of the utmost importance and every man should strive to be master of that kind of knowledge which will lead him to make a good choice. There are many more patterns of lives than souls to choose them; therefore, there is no need for the first chooser to be indifferent nor the last, discouraged.

The souls make their choices. Those that have come from heaven make the majority of foolish selections, while those from beneath the earth are wiser both from experience and from observation. After the choosing, the souls go before Lachesis who gives to each its guiding spirit. Each spirit conducts its soul beneath the hand of Clotho as she spins, on to Atropos, and under the throne of Necessity to the Plain of Lethe through burning heat and dense smoke. At evening all the souls stop by the River Lethe and are obliged to drink of the water, after which they sink into oblivious slumber. At midnight, roused by thunder and an earthquake, the souls go shooting up to birth and a new life begins.

The process of metempsychosis thus described in detail in the *Republic* fits perfectly into the frame provided by the description of a series of

transmigrations in the *Phaedrus*.¹¹ In the latter Dialogue Socrates declares that, before he can discuss love as a variety of divine madness, he will have to explain the nature of the soul. This will best be done, he says, by telling what the soul is like. In likening the soul to a pair of winged steeds and a charioteer, Socrates finds occasion to describe metempsychosis.

Most souls pass through a series of ten earthly lives separated by transitional periods. One thousand years are required for a life and the correspondingly transitional period. The soul of the philosopher, on the other hand, or the lover of youth is freed from the circle of births after only three lives, all three the same; other souls will not so quickly find release.

The souls of ordinary men, in their transitional periods, are divided into eleven bands, each following one of the gods, and all are carried around with the revolution of the heavenly sphere, jostling one another in their attempts to gain the highest possible position. All these souls have wings by which they are borne upward. When any soul fails to see a portion of the Truth, which is outside the heavenly sphere, for at least one whole revolution, it becomes filled with forgetfulness and evil, is weighed down, loses its wings and falls to earth. There it naturally assumes one of nine forms of human life, depending on the amount of Truth which it has seen. The nine forms, in descending order of merit, are: (1) seeker after true wisdom, seeker after true beauty, friend of the Muses or true lover; (2) just king, or warrior and commander of the host; (3) manager of a city's affairs, or steward of a household, or merchant; (4) gymnast or physician; (5) prophet or priest; (6) poet or some other copier; (7) workman or husbandman; (8) sophist or demagogue; and (9) tyrant.

The soul lives a normal span of life in this first incarnation, then dies, is judged and goes beneath the earth or to some region in heaven, where it stays for an unspecified period, making retribution and receiving rewards for the deeds of its past life.

The soul then chooses its second incarnation,

presumably by the ritual described in the *Republic*. The second may be an animal, if the soul desires it. A soul that has chosen to occupy an animal's body may, in some later incarnation, return to human form again. The second, and all subsequent, choices in the cycle are made by perfectly free will. After the tenth reincarnation (or third, for the special class of philosophers) the soul becomes once more winged and recommences its pursuit of the gods and its strife after a vision of the Truth.

The *Phaedrus* myth describes a whole cycle of transmigrations, while the Vision of Er in the *Republic* describes a single one. There is thus no overlapping of subject matter; yet certain motifs appear in both myths. For example, in both Dialogues the choice of a new life involves a combination of chance and intelligence. In the *Republic*, Necessity is an important figure, while in the *Phaedrus* a deeree of Adrasteia controls the souls' transmigrations. Such similarity without exact correspondence is characteristic of Plato's treatment of metempsychosis as a 'right opinion.' We can form correct opinions of the sort of things that happen in the life after death, but the precise details are hidden from our eyes.

The three brief passages of the *Timaeus* that refer to metempsychosis are in harmony with the doctrine presented in the other Dialogues.¹²

The last Dialogue written by Plato was the *Laws*, and in it we find metempsychosis once more. At the beginning of the tenth book the Athenian stranger makes the observation that belief in the gods is the foundation of just behaviour. There are three sorts of impiety: disbelief in the existence of the gods, belief that they exist but care nothing for humankind, and belief that they can be bribed by prayers and sacrifices to overlook wrong-doing. The Athenian stranger then gives his refutation of each sort of impiety.

But it is not enough merely to defeat the sceptic in argument; his heart must be touched as well as his mind. He must not forget that the individual is born in order that all creation may be as harmonious as possible; the universe was not created for the benefit of any one man. The soul is assigned, now to one body, now to an-

other; if its character improves, it is assigned to a better body, and conversely. This belief will bring consolation to the man who beholds the temporary prosperity of the unrighteous.

Elsewhere in the *Laws*,¹³ in the discussion of intentional and inexcusable murders, Plato declares that the improper pursuit of wealth is the real cause of such crimes. Those who practice religious rites hear and believe the following doctrine: such murders are punished in Hades and again in this world, where the murderer is forced to die a death such as he inflicted upon his victim. For those who believe this there will be no need of law.

Plato regarded religious belief as essential to the most harmonious conduct of human society;¹⁴ and he advocated the preservation of ancient forms of religion and other things because nothing is more harmful than change, except to correct an obvious evil.¹⁵ But metempsychosis was more to Plato than a useful belief; it was a certainty. Twice he causes Socrates to declare that, while the details of the doctrine are not known precisely, something of the sort must be true. Plato's writings everywhere exhibit complete assurance that good and evil deeds will receive their due reward, a truth of such importance to his mind and heart that his words, when he is discussing retribution and the life after death, overflow the bounds of reasoned discourse and become the sort of poetry in prose that is called a 'myth.'

Such was Plato's doctrine of metempsychosis, and we have seen reason to believe that it stemmed ultimately from Pythagoras. But if one opens almost any history of Greek religion or philosophy to the section dealing with the doctrine, one finds some such statement as this: 'Metempsychosis was one of the chief teachings of the Orphics, and from them it was adopted by Pythagoras, Plato and other Greek thinkers.' While there is a moderate amount of early evidence that Pythagoras taught the doctrine, there is not one scrap of evidence earlier than the Christian era connecting metempsychosis with the name of Orpheus.

The tendency to magnify the importance of the Orphic movement first appeared among the an-

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ients themselves. Proclus, for example, said that the Greeks derived all their theology from the Orphics. In the last century this tendency has not diminished. Hans Werner Thomas refers to the 'Orphic madness' that seems to possess writers on the subject, making them lose their critical faculties and causing them to make statements not only not founded on ancient evidence but even contradicted by it. A very few writers raised questioning voices against making metempsychosis primarily an Orphic doctrine: Lobeck in 1829, Gereke and Clemen in the present century. In 1932 von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff made Pythagoras the founder of Greek belief in metempsychosis and expressed strong doubt of the validity of an Orphism woven of bits of evidence scattered over 1000 years of Greek literary activity.¹⁶ Since then, Linforth in his 'The Arts of Orpheus'¹⁷ has supplied the much needed critical study of the Orphic evidence, and has reduced Orphism more nearly to its true proportions.

It must be emphasized that, when we seek the source of Plato's belief in metempsychosis, we are dealing with probabilities, not certainties. The evidence at our disposal indicates that Pythagoras, not the Orphics, introduced metempsychosis to the Greek world. The Pythagorean societies contributed to the spread of belief in the doctrine. Within half a century it passed from Italy to Sicily, finding favor in high society at the court of the tyrant of Acragas, and with the itinerant philosopher Empedocles. Plato returned from his first journey to Magna Graecia fired with enthusiasm for the doctrine and it became an integral part of his eschatology. Many students of ancient religion may have erred, but the Clown in *Twelfth Night* was right, for he allotted metempsychosis to Pythagoras, saying, 'What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wildfowl?'

To which Malvolio replies, 'That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird'.

NOTES

¹This paper was read in New York City before the Classical Association of the Atlantic States on May 18, 1946.

²*Aeneid* VI. 713 ff.

³ *Meno* 81A ff.

⁴ *Meno* 86BC.

⁵ *Phaedo* 70C ff.

⁶ *Cratylus* 400BC.

⁷ *Gorgias* 492E f.

⁸ *Phaedo* 70C f.

⁹ *Phaedo* 80A ff.

¹⁰ *Republie* X. 613E ff.

¹¹ *Phaedrus* 245C ff.

¹² *Timaeus* 41D ff., 76D f., 90E ff.

¹³ *Laws* IX. 870A ff.

¹⁴ *Laws* X. 885B.

¹⁵ *Laws* VII. 797DE.

¹⁶ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, II, Berlin, 1932, pp. 202, 385.

¹⁷ Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1941.

HERBERT S. LONG

YALE UNIVERSITY

REVIEWS

Plato's Theory of Man. An Introduction to the Realistic Philosophy of Culture. By JOHN WILD. Pp. x, 320 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1946). \$5.00.

To the recent studies of Plato's conception of education (Werner Jaeger), religion (Friedrich Solmsen), and cosmology (Hugo Perls), must now be added this thoughtful, carefully worked out volume about his conception of human culture. The student of Plato's thought cannot afford to give Professor Wild's study less than his deepest attention. Like the other scholars named, Wild shows extensive indebtedness to Professor Jaeger; but he is essentially an independent thinker and investigator who has marked out for himself a freehold on that mountain in the landscape of thought which is Plato.

The author undertakes to examine Plato's reflections on the order of human culture and his 'realistic view of the nature of man which lies at their core' (v). He considers Plato as a helper to define the fuzzy thinking of our day upon some of our greatest contemporary problems: the classification of the arts and techniques; their use and abuse; their relation to life; the nature of tyranny and the avoidance of it; the relation of the individual to the community; and the inversion of both the individual and the community. He believes that Plato shows us the pathway whither 'we still want to

go, and how to avoid cliffs and swamps. Our job is to dig this pathway out of the dialogues' (12). Plato's explanation (*Phaedo* 71A) that 'opposite things come to be out of opposites', and that there are opposed processes between opposites 'from the positive down to the negative, and from the negative up again to positive' (a statement supported by Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1046B), describes the author's method for the study of human and social inversion (*ἀνατροπή*).

Professor Wild starts his exposition with a statement of Plato's conception of *τέχνη*. To Plato, *τέχνη* includes both pure science and what we call art, craft, or practice. In our distinction between these two we follow, and even go beyond, Plato's pupil, Aristotle. Plato's use of the term signifies 'the care or cultivation of something, rationally guided for the sake of achieving some legitimate end' (88). It always exists for the sake of something. It is rational action flowing out into the external world, whereas reason flowing into a man, concerned with his own action is *ἀρετή* (76). Virtue seeks to achieve *σοφία*, 'insight', on which all the other virtues depend. '*Ἀρετή* without *τέχνη* is like a navigator without a ship; but *τέχνη* without *ἀρετή* is like a fleet without a navigator. The understanding of *τέχνη* is a branch of philosophy subsidiary to *ἀρετή*. When philosophy loses control of its subsidiary branches, when sciences decompose into mere techniques, anarchy is the result. Normally, philosophy should control education, and education politics; but in a state of anarchy, this normal order becomes inverted (80). Then the practitioner of either fine or useful art, lacking that *σοφία*, which only prolonged effort and discipline can provide, is tempted to be content with mere technical control over his matter. Instead of serving as a guide of his audience, he panders to its desires. Under such circumstances, a child develops according to his own desires, with no training for the struggles of mature life, cannot distinguish between truth and opinion, and, like the dwellers in Plato's cave, falls a victim to the pleasing illusions held before him (85). A moderately alert reader can readily draw modern educational parallels which illustrate only too well the dangers which Plato

feared, that can deform social life.

Just as the ship of state is the best image under which to delineate the life of society, so the image of the charioteer from the *Phaedrus*, with its interpretation in Book IV of the *Republic*, best represents the individual (148). Rational insight can guide him into knowledge of the permanent structure of the world and of life in the world, such an insight as Diotima outlines to Socrates in the *Symposium*. But here occur successive steps in the derationalizing of life, from the honor-loving man (*ὁ φιλότιμος ἄντρας*) down through the stages of the money-loving man (*ὁ φιλοχρήματος*) and the 'democratic' man, to the ultimate degradation of the tyrant (160-165). In the first stage of descent, pride makes hope for human victory (*φιλονεκία*) replace reason as a guide. Finally, hindsight, memory of past pleasures, supplants foresight, determination from ahead, and anarchy necessarily follows.

'The final source of human evil lies in the disordering of human knowledge' (174). The normal state of man is best represented by the myth of the cave, and the only correction for him lies in a course of correction which will turn him around (*α περιαγωγή*) from beholding the shadows of opinion to contemplating the light of truth.

Professor Wild betrays an extreme pessimism about the prospects of present-day democracy. Its lack of a guiding principle especially appals him. 'What we mean by democracy to-day is movement in the direction *away from* tyranny and private opinion *towards* the classless theocracy of the *Republic*, or at least *towards* some society actually integrated, as our present-day democracy only pretends to be, by a common reference to the stable, and therefore, super-human, source of all genuine science and wisdom' (111). Domination, 'either control by rational authority or control by irrational authority', seems to him unavoidable. In his apparent distrust of democracy he is still true to his master Plato.

In good Platonic-mediaeval fashion (and he respects Aquinas as well as Plato) Professor Wild traces this process of inversion to 'a fabri-

native tendency in man which leads him to confuse his own constructions with real being, the fabrication of God' (310). It is pride, the worst of the seven deadly sins, that lies at the root of this decay.

Plato's Theory of Man (only a part of which is treated in this review) is a book to be commended not only to the student of philosophy in general and of Plato in particular, but also to those who have deep interest in combating whatever may be damaging the educational structure, the social structure, or the body politic.

JOHN PAUL PRITCHARD

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

St. Augustine: The First Catechetical Instruction. Translated and Annotated by The Rev. JOSEPH P. CHRISTOPHER. 171 pp. (The Ancient Christian Writers, no. 2, The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Md.) \$2.50.

The only treatise of Christian antiquity that was written for candidates for the catechumenate and that has come down to us is St. Augustine's *De Catechizandis Rudibus*. The work, we are told by the translator (5), was written about 405, although the year 400 is preferred by the Benedictine editors and by most recent patrologists (cf. Altaner-Ferrua, *Patrologia*³, 1944, 298). Augustine was the first to appreciate the value of the question-and-answer method, especially in studying the candidate's motives for becoming a Christian. In this treatise he philosophizes on history, and foreshadows his great *De Civitate Dei* by his discussion of the two cities. Echoes of Minucius Felix and Tertullian appear in it, and it bears a close resemblance to two older works, the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, and the *Demonstratio Praedicationis Apostolicae* of St. Irenaeus. Practically all later works on catechetics are based upon this book and upon Augustine's even more famous *De Doctrina Christiana*.

The present work is an adaptation, with some revision and a few additions (mostly bibliographical), of Father Christopher's doctoral dissertation written at the Catholic University in 1926. The new work, however, lacks the Latin text. The Benedictine text, with a few correc-

tions, has been used as the basis for translation. This was certainly the best text available, and Professor Alexander Souter has stated as his opinion that very little improvement can be made upon it by future editors.

When the translation of Dr. Christopher first appeared in 1926, it was hailed by reviewers as easily the best that had appeared up to that time. No new English translation has appeared since then to challenge this supremacy. In this new edition the translator has changed words and phrases in at least twenty places noted by the reviewer. In every instance the changes are welcome, although they were not always clearly necessary. But in section 3 (16) an ungrammatical 'due to' has been changed to the more acceptable 'owing to'. The same change should have been made on page 8 of the Introduction to the revised edition. As a whole, the present translation appears excellent. There is no paraphrasing in an attempt to sidestep difficult passages, and an effort both sincere and capable has been applied to clear up all such difficulties. If any remain, they are not outstanding. The few remarks offered here must not be considered as belittling a careful piece of work.

In section 4 (17), *serenum* could probably be more suitably translated by 'calm' rather than by 'clearness'. A few sentences in the text are quite long. This reviewer, alas! knows from a similar attempt made by himself on another work of St. Augustine how hard it sometimes is to avoid such lengthy sentences. As examples, I should cite pp. 26-27, where three successive sentences contain nine, eight, and nine lines, respectively. Again, on pp. 35-36 occur one sentence of eighteen lines and another of nineteen. In section 16 (40), a present infinitive *liberari* is translated by a future without any clear necessity. In section 28 (57), an *ex quo* is translated by 'wherein', instead of by simple 'when'. In section 25 (54), *venatores* is unsatisfactorily rendered by 'common gladiators', although the commentary (121) rightly explains the term.

The commentary is very satisfying and leaves untouched no point suggested by the text. It is almost entirely taken from the commentary of the 1926 dissertation with many omissions of points of purely philological interest. Several

bibliographical additions have been made, as stated above. Much of this material in the present commentary could also have been shortened or omitted without serious loss. But *melius est abundare quam deficere* if the financial angle is taken care of. Just a few points of disagreement may be mentioned here.

It is said (93) that Augustine attended catechetical lectures at Rome. What authority can be adduced for such a statement? *Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te* is cited as an oxymoron. This mistake did not occur in the thesis. Pompey is said (135–136) to have come from Damascus to Jerusalem in the year 65 to put an end to the civil war among the Jews. The fact is that in 65 he sent his general Scaurus into Syria. Pompey left Damascus in 63, the year of his arrival there, and then set out for Jerusalem, which he captured. (Cf. Dennefeld, *Histoire d'Israël*², 1935, 192.) On page 136, a reference to Green's brief treatment on Augustine and the divisions of history would have been in order. The sentence quoted in note 35 (102) is a good example not only of a special type of anaphora but of parison also. A reference to Weiskotten's edition of the *Vita Augustini* by Possidius would be in order in connection with the *Circumcelliones*. It is stated (110–111) that Augustine believed the Old Latin version of the Bible to be inspired. In support of this unproven statement, two references are given: one of them, to a letter of Augustine, is incorrect; the other reference is to a section of *De Doctrina Christiana*, where Augustine is speaking about the Septuagint. Only three misprints have caught my attention: *nibil* for *nihil* (125); *mortusi* for *mortui* (138); and *adimet* for *adimat* (147). The book is very attractively printed.

Dr. Christopher's work is a useful addition to works in English that help bring students closer to a Latin author who richly merits careful study.

JOHN J. GAVIGAN, O.S.A.

MERRIMAC COLLEGE

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(Continued from page 143)

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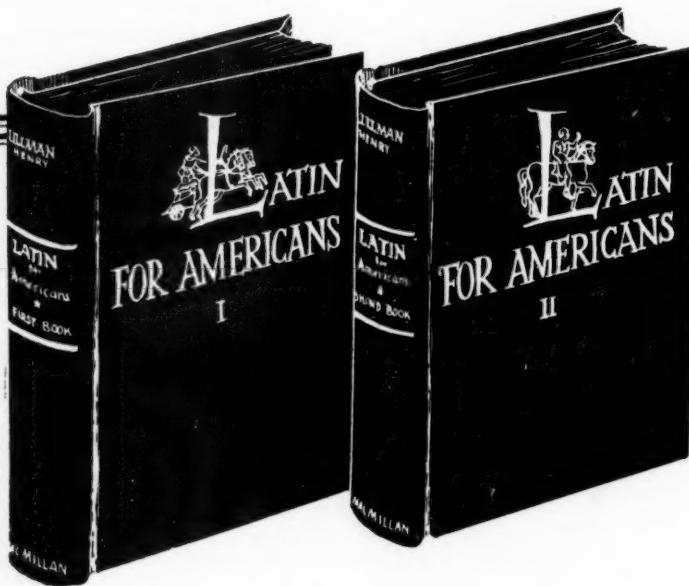
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